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## **Consumer Price Index, Boston-Cambridge-Newton — January 2020**

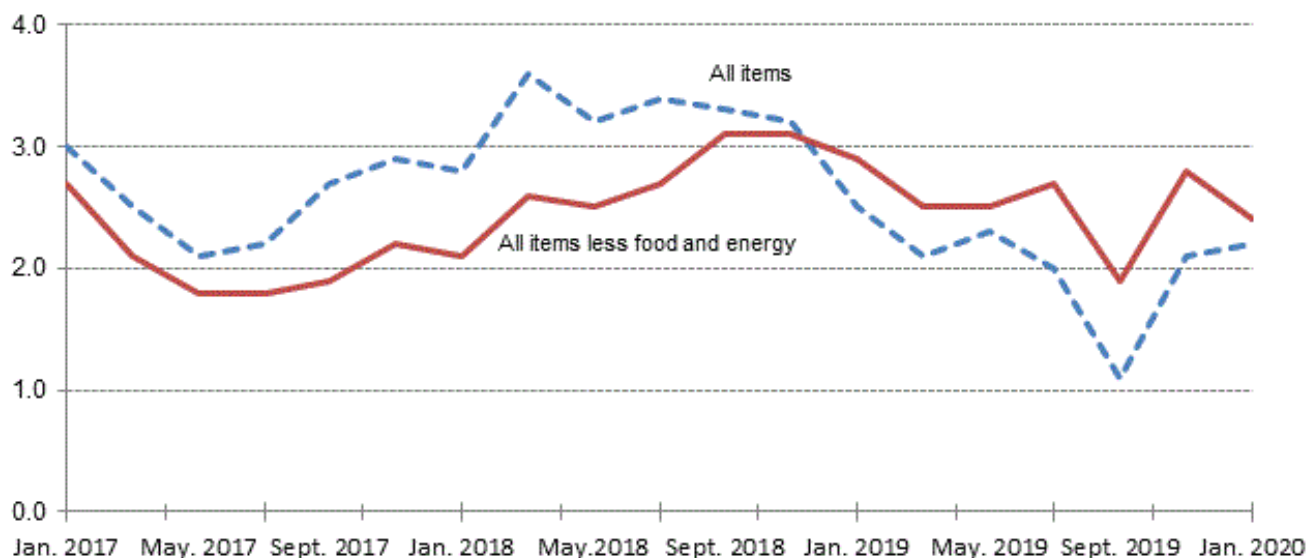
### **Area prices increased by 0.6 percent over two months; up 2.2 percent from a year ago**

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Boston-Cambridge-Newton area increased 0.6 percent in January, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Acting Regional Commissioner William J. Sibley noted that this was mainly attributable to higher shelter costs, up 0.7 percent, and, to a lesser extent, higher prices for food, up 1.5 percent. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bimonthly changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the Boston CPI-U rose 2.2 percent. The increase was largely attributable to higher shelter costs within all items less food and energy, up 3.2 percent, and, to a lesser extent, higher food and energy costs, up 1.7 and 0.6 percent, respectively. (See [chart 1.](#))

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Boston-Cambridge-Newton, January 2017 - January 2020**

Percent



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Food**

Food prices increased 1.5 percent since November, mainly due to higher food at home or grocery store prices, up 1.3 percent. Higher food away from home or restaurant prices, up 1.7 percent, also contributed to the increase. Higher food at home prices were mainly driven by higher prices for the other food at home category, up 2.4 percent.

Food prices increased 1.7 percent over the year, mainly due to higher restaurant prices, up 2.7 percent. Higher grocery store prices, up 1.1 percent, also contributed to the increase. Higher food at home prices were mainly driven by higher prices for the other food at home category, up 2.7 percent.

## **Energy**

The energy index edged up 0.8 percent over the two months, mainly due to higher electricity prices, up 2.8 percent.

Energy prices edged up 0.6 percent from a year ago, mainly due to higher gasoline prices, up 4.1 percent. Lower prices for both utility (piped) gas, down 4.4 percent, and electricity, down 0.5 percent, partially offset this increase.

## **All items less food and energy**

The index for all items less food and energy edged up from November (0.4 percent) mainly due to higher shelter costs, up 0.7 percent. Within shelter, higher costs for owners' equivalent rent of residences, up 1.2 percent, and to a lesser extent, higher costs of rent of primary residence, up 1.1 percent led the increase. Also contributing to the overall increase were higher prices for new vehicles, up 7.2 percent. Lower apparel costs, down 4.7 percent, partially offset the overall increase.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.4 percent, with higher shelter costs being the main driver of the increase, up 3.2 percent. Within shelter, higher costs for owners' equivalent rent of residences, up 3.7 percent, and to a lesser extent, rent of primary residence, up 2.8 percent, led the increase. Also contributing to the overall increase in prices within all items less food and energy were higher medical care costs, up 7.4 percent, and, to a lesser extent, higher costs within education and communication, up 3.7 percent.

## **CPI-W**

In January, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 284.382. The CPI-W increased 0.8 percent over two months and 2.3 percent over the year.

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**The March 2020 Consumer Price Index for Boston-Cambridge-Newton is scheduled to be released on Friday, April 10, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. (ET).**

## **Technical Note**

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 94 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 28 percent of the

total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.












































The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at [www.bls.gov/cpi](http://www.bls.gov/cpi) and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at [www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf).

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The Boston-Cambridge-Newton, Mass.-N.H. Core Based Statistical Area covered in this release is comprised of Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk Counties in Massachusetts; Rockingham, Strafford Counties in New Hampshire.














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**Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Cambridge-Newton, Ma.-N.H. (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Nov. 2019	Dec. 2019	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2019	Nov. 2019	Dec. 2019
All items .....		283.526		285.181	2.2	0.6	
All items (1967 = 100) .....		824.078		828.885			
Food and beverages .....		268.345		272.010	1.7	1.4	
Food .....		269.785		273.800	1.7	1.5	
Food at home .....		251.768	255.142	255.070	1.1	1.3	0.0
Cereal and bakery products .....		301.156		298.315	-1.0	-0.9	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs .....		256.055		259.386	2.7	1.3	
Dairy and related products .....		284.327		284.306	-0.8	0.0	
Fruits and vegetables .....		319.517		325.557	0.3	1.9	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1) .....		162.868		166.393	0.6	2.2	
Other food at home .....		200.391		205.235	2.7	2.4	
Food away from home .....		301.331		306.598	2.7	1.7	
Alcoholic beverages .....		256.274		256.173	1.7	0.0	
Housing .....		297.126		299.489	2.8	0.8	
Shelter .....		352.412	350.481	355.029	3.2	0.7	1.3
Rent of primary residence(2) .....		364.041	365.705	368.015	2.8	1.1	0.6
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)(3)(4) .....		374.641	376.453	379.229	3.7	1.2	0.7
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)(3)(4) .....		374.641	376.453	379.229	3.7	1.2	0.7
Fuels and utilities .....		302.251		305.656	-1.3	1.1	
Household energy .....		255.453	255.474	258.711	-1.6	1.3	1.3
Energy services(2) .....		268.780	268.780	273.616	-1.8	1.8	1.8
Electricity(2) .....		304.177	304.177	312.677	-0.5	2.8	2.8
Utility (piped) gas service(2) .....		200.074	200.074	199.773	-4.4	-0.2	-0.2
Household furnishings and operations .....		129.152		130.559	3.1	1.1	
Apparel .....		135.676		129.316	-4.2	-4.7	
Transportation .....		190.692		192.241	0.0	0.8	
Private transportation .....		191.576		193.330	-0.1	0.9	
New and used motor vehicles(5) .....		102.885		105.369	-1.5	2.4	
New Vehicles(1) .....		205.236		220.052	1.9	7.2	
Used cars and trucks(1) .....		316.390		311.192	-2.1	-1.6	
Motor fuel .....		223.122	223.269	223.300	4.1	0.1	0.0
Gasoline (all types) .....		220.542	220.686	220.711	4.1	0.1	0.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular(6) .....		213.377	213.492	213.570	4.0	0.1	0.0
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(6)(7) .....		237.105	237.678	236.923	4.2	-0.1	-0.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium(6) .....		235.471	235.738	235.483	4.8	0.0	-0.1
Motor vehicle insurance(1) .....							
Medical care .....		701.424		703.603	7.4	0.3	
Recreation(5) .....		122.090		123.000	-1.2	0.7	
Education and communication(5) .....		171.341		170.780	3.7	-0.3	
Tuition, other fees, and child care(1) .....		1,394.215		1,398.308	3.7	0.3	
Other goods and services .....		504.393		512.043	2.8	1.5	
<b>Commodity and service group</b>							
Commodities .....		191.527		192.467	0.8	0.5	
Commodities less food and beverages .....		151.686		151.395	0.0	-0.2	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Cambridge-Newton, Ma.-N.H. (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Nov. 2019	Dec. 2019	Jan. 2020	Jan. 2019	Nov. 2019	Dec. 2019
Nondurables less food and beverages...		198.167		195.641	-0.4	-1.3	
Durables .....		107.282		108.668	0.6	1.3	
Services.....		366.356		368.670	2.9	0.6	
<b>Special aggregate indexes</b>							
All items less shelter.....		258.471		259.784	1.6	0.5	
All items less medical care .....		267.678		269.316	1.9	0.6	
Commodities less food .....		155.855		155.571	0.1	-0.2	
Nondurables .....		232.324		232.817	0.8	0.2	
Nondurables less food.....		201.444		199.108	-0.2	-1.2	
Services less rent of shelter(3) .....		399.799		401.880	2.4	0.5	
Services less medical care services.....		342.394		344.832	2.3	0.7	
Energy .....		239.561	239.637	241.489	0.6	0.8	0.8
All items less energy .....		291.668		293.324	2.3	0.6	
All items less food and energy .....		296.308		297.564	2.4	0.4	

**Footnotes**

(1) Indexes on a January 1978=100 base.

(2) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(3) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.

(4) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

(5) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(6) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(7) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.